

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended). In the transfer of a print job from a client device to an imaging device, wherein~~A method for obscuring, relative to non-volatile media, by-product, spool-associated data files which~~ are created in the context of cooperative interaction between the client~~a computing device and the an imaging device, such as a printer,~~ in relation to the handling of a print document~~job file, and where~~ such interaction includes print and handling~~include~~ job-file data transit activities conducted in a transit zone which is operatively interposed these devices, and wherein, after the print job transfer is completed and said by-product data files no longer have operative utility, components of said by-product data files remain in non-volatile media in said transit zone, a method for obscuring said by-product data files from non-volatile media in said transit zone ~~said method~~ comprising

locating and identifying within such zone, each such by-product file at least at a point in time which lies in a time span that is beyond the end of that file's utility, and before any destructive alteration takes place with respect to each such by-product ~~the~~ file, and

within such time span, and following said locating and identifying, applying a random bit mask obscuring process to the by-product files~~file~~.

Claim 2 (original). The method of claim 1, wherein said applying involves the recurrent application of plural, successive, different, random bit masks to the file.

Claim 3 (currently amended). The method of claim 1, wherein the created by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ files include files generated as a result of transmitting data, but which are otherwise not a component of the data that is transmitted, and in the categories of ghost and shadow files created as a result of transmitting data, including residual components of the data transmitted that are left in non-volatile media.

Claim 4 (original). The method of claim 3, wherein the step of applying a random bit mask process is performed by a print processor.

Claim 5 (original). The method of claim 3, wherein the step of applying a random bit mask process is performed by a raster image processor.

Claim 6 (original). The method of claim 3, wherein the step of applying a random bit mask process is performed by one of (a) a print processor, (b) a spooler, (c) a printer driver, (d) a raster image processor, (e) a port/language monitor, and (f) a device controller.

Claim 7 (currently amended). The method of claim 1, wherein at least one by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ file resides on the [[computing-]]client device side of the transit zone.

Claim 8 (currently amended). The method of claim 1, wherein at least one by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ file resides on the imaging-device side of the transit zone.

Claim 9 (currently amended). The method of claim 4, wherein at least one by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ file resides on the ~~[[computing-~~
~~]]client~~ device side of the transit zone.

Claim 10 (currently amended). The method of claim 4, wherein at least one by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ file resides on the imaging-device side of the transit zone.

Claim 11 (currently amended). The method of claim 9, wherein the at least one by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ file is an encrypted file.

Claim 12 (currently amended). The method of claim 10, wherein the at least one by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ file is an encrypted file.

Claim 13 (original). The method of claim 1, wherein said locating, identifying and applying steps are associated with controlling activities that are engaged in by one of a print processor and a raster image processor, which processor also performs an additional function of by-product file-locking in a manner assuring a controlling role for the processor in relation to by-product file obscuring.

Claim 14 (currently amended). The method of claim 13, wherein at least one by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ file resides on the [[computing-]]client device side of the transit zone.

Claim 15 (currently amended). The method of claim 13, wherein at least one by-product, ~~spool-associated~~ file resides on the imaging-device side of the transit zone.

Claim 16 (new). The method of claim 1 wherein said step of applying a random bit mask obscuring process includes recurrent application of different random bit masks to the identified locations of the by-product files, whereby the by-product files are obscured.